

TWO

.....

The man the Americans had dubbed Target One sat at his regular bistro table at the sidewalk café in front of the May Hotel on Mimar Hayrettin. Most nights, when the weather was nice, he stopped here for a shot or two of raki in chilled sparkling water. The weather this evening was awful, but the long canopy hung over the sidewalk tables by the staff of the May kept him dry.

There were just a few other patrons seated under the canopy, couples smoking and drinking together before either heading back up to their rooms in the hotel or out to other Old Town nightlife destinations.

Target One had grown to live for his evening glass of raki. The anise-flavored milky white drink made from grape pomace was alcoholic, and forbidden in his home country of Libya and other nations where the more liberal Hanafi school of Islam is not de rigueur, but the ex-JSO spy had been forced

into the occasional use of alcohol for tradecraft purposes during his service abroad. Now that he had become a wanted man, he'd grown to rely on the slight buzz from the liquor to help relax him and aid in his sleep, though even the liberal Hanafi school does not permit intoxication.

There were just a few vehicles rolling by on the cobblestone street ten feet from his table. This road was hardly a busy thoroughfare, even on weekend nights with clear skies. There was some foot traffic on the pavement around him, however, and Target One was enjoying himself watching the attractive women of Istanbul pass by under their umbrellas. The occasional view of the legs of a sexy woman, coupled with the warming buzz of the raki, made this rainy night especially pleasant for the man seated at the sidewalk café.

At nine p.m., Sam Driscoll drove his silver Fiat Linea calmly and carefully through the evening traffic that flowed into Istanbul's Old Town from the outlying neighborhoods.

The city lights sparkled on his wet windshield. Traffic had thinned out more and more the deeper he got into Old Town, and as the American stopped for a red light, he glanced quickly at a GPS locator Velcroed onto the dashboard. Once he reconfirmed the distance to his target, he reached over to the passenger seat and wrapped his hand around his motorcycle helmet. As the light changed he did a long neck roll to relax himself, slipped the crash helmet over his head, and then lowered the visor over his eyes.

He winced at what was to come, he could not help it. Even though his heart was pounding and nearly every synapse of his brain was firing in the focus of his operation, he still found the perspective to shake his head and talk to himself.

He'd done a lot of nasty things in his days as a soldier and an operator, but he had never done this.

"A goddamned fly swat."

The Libyan took his first sip from his second glass of raki of the evening as a silver Fiat headed quickly up the street, some eighty yards to his north. Target One was looking in the opposite direction; a beautiful Turkish girl with a red umbrella in her left hand and a leash to her miniature schnauzer in her right passed by on the sidewalk, and the seated man had a great view of her long and toned legs.

But a shout to his left caused him to shift his attention toward the intersection in front of him, and there he saw the silver Fiat, a blur, racing through the light. He watched the four-door shoot up the quiet street.

He expected it to shoot on by.

He brought his drink to his lips; he was not worried.

Not until the car veered hard to the left with a squeal of its wet tires, and the Libyan found himself staring down the approaching front grille of the car.

With the little glass still in his hand, Target One stood quickly, but his feet were fixed to the pavement. He had nowhere to run.

The woman walking the miniature schnauzer screamed.

The silver Fiat slammed into the man at the bistro table, striking him square, running him down, and sending him hard into the brick wall of the May Hotel, pinning him there, half under and half in front of the vehicle. The Libyan's rib cage shattered and splintered, sending shards of bone through his vital organs like shot from a riot gun.

Witnesses at the café and on the street around it reported later that the man in the black crash helmet behind the wheel took a calm moment to put his vehicle into reverse, even checking the rearview mirror, before backing into the intersection and driving off toward the north. His actions seemed no different than those of a man on a Sunday drive who had just pulled into a parking space at the market, realized he had left his wallet at home, and then backed out to return for it.

One kilometer southeast of the incident, Driscoll parked the four-door Fiat in a private drive. The little car's hood was bent and its front grille and bumper were torn and dented, but Sam positioned the car nose in so the damage would not be evident from the street. He stepped out of the vehicle and walked to a scooter locked on a chain nearby. Before unlocking it with a key and motoring away into the rainy night, he transmitted a brief message into the radio feature of his encrypted mobile phone.

"Target One is down. Sam is clear."



The Çırağan Palace is an opulent mansion that was built in the 1860s for Abdülaziz I, a sultan who reigned in the midst of the Ottoman Empire's long decline. After his lavish spending put his nation into debt he was deposed and "encouraged" to commit suicide with, of all things, a pair of scissors.

Nowhere was the extravagance that led to the downfall of Abdülaziz more on display than the Çırağan. It was now a five-star hotel, its manicured lawns and crystal clear pools running from the façade of the palace buildings to the western shoreline of the Bosphorus Strait, the water line that separates Europe from Asia.

The Tuğra restaurant on the first floor of the Çırağan Palace has magnificent high-ceilinged rooms with windows affording wide views of the hotel grounds and the strait beyond, and even during the rain shower that persisted this Tuesday evening, the bright lights of passing yachts could be seen and enjoyed by the diners at their tables.

Along with the many wealthy tourists enjoying their exquisite meals, there were also quite a few businessmen and women from all over the world, alone and in groups of varying number, dining in the restaurant.

John Clark fit in nicely, dining by himself at a table adorned with crystal, fine bone china, and gold-plated flatware. He'd been seated at a small table near the entrance, far away from the grand windows overlooking the water. His waiter was a handsome middle-aged man in a black tuxedo, and he brought Clark a sumptuous meal, and while the American could not

say he did not enjoy the food, his focus was on a table far across the room.

Moments after John bit into his first tender bite of monkfish, the *maître d'* seated three Arab men in expensive suits at the table by the window, and a waiter took their order for cocktails.

Two of the men were guests of the hotel; Clark knew this from his team's surveillance and the hard work of the intelligence analysts employed by his organization. They were Omani bankers, and they were of no interest to him. But the third man, a fifty-year-old Libyan with gray hair and a trim beard, *was* John's concern.

He was Target Two.

As Clark ate with his fork in his left hand, a maneuver the right-handed American had been forced to learn since his injury, he used a tiny flesh-colored hearing amplifier in his right ear to focus on the men's voices. It was difficult to separate them from others speaking in the restaurant, but after a few minutes he was able to pick out the words of Target Two.

Clark returned his attention to his monkfish and waited.

A few minutes later a waiter took the dinner order at the table of Arabs by the window. Clark heard his target order the Kulbasti veal, and the other men ordered different dishes.

This was good. Had the Omanis ordered the same as their Libyan dining companion, then Clark would have switched to plan B. Plan B would go down out in the street, and in the street John had a hell of a lot more unknowns to deal with than he did here in the Tuğra.

But each man had ordered a unique entrée, and Clark si-

lently thanked his luck, then he popped the earpiece out of his ear and slipped it back into his pocket.

John sipped an after-dinner port while his target's table was served cold soups and white wine. The American avoided looking down at his watch; he was on a precise timetable but knew better than to give any outward appearance of anxiety or fretfulness. Instead he enjoyed his port and counted off the minutes in his head.

Shortly before the soup bowls were cleared from the table of Arab men, Clark asked his waiter to point the way to the men's room, and he was directed past the kitchen. In the bathroom John slipped into a stall and sat down, and quickly began unwrapping the bandaging around his forearm.

The bandage was not a ruse; his wounded hand was real and it hurt like hell. A few months earlier it had been smashed with a hammer, and he'd undergone three surgeries to repair bones and joints in the intervening months, but he'd not enjoyed a decent night's sleep since the day of his injury.

But even though the bandaging was real, it did serve an additional purpose. Under the heavy wrapping, between the two splints that held his index and middle fingers in fixed positions, he had secreted a small injector. It was positioned so that with his thumb he could push the narrow tip out of the wrapping, pop off the cap that covered the needle, and plunge it into his target.

But that was plan B, the less desirable action, and John had decided to go for plan A.

He removed the injector and placed it in his pocket, and then slowly and gingerly rewrapped his hand.

The injector contained two hundred milligrams of a special form of succinylcholine poison. The dose in the plastic device could be either injected into a target or ingested. Both methods of transfer to the victim would be lethal, though injection was, not surprisingly, the far more efficient delivery method for the poison.

John left the bathroom with the device hidden in his left hand.

Clark's timing was less than perfect. As he came out of the bathroom and passed by the entrance to the kitchen, he had hoped to see his target's waiter exiting with the entrées, but the hallway was empty. John pretended to regard the paintings on the walls, and then the ornate gilded molding in the hallway. Finally the waiter appeared with a tray full of covered dishes on his shoulder. John stood between the man and the dining room, and he demanded the server put down the tray on a tray jack right there and fetch him the chef. The waiter, hiding his frustration behind a veneer of politeness, did as he was told.

As the man disappeared behind the swinging door, Clark quickly checked the covered dishes, found the veal, and then dispensed the poison from the injector directly into the center of the thin piece of meat. A few clear bubbles appeared in the sauce, but the vast majority of the poison was now infused in the veal itself.

When the head chef appeared a moment later, Clark had

already re-covered the dish and pocketed the injector. He thanked the man effusively for a splendid dinner, and the waiter delivered the food quickly to his table so that the dishes were not refused by the guests for being served cold.

Minutes later John paid his bill, and he stood to leave his table. His waiter brought him his raincoat, and as he put it on he glanced over quickly at Target Two. The Libyan was just finishing the last bite of the Kulbasti veal; he was deep in conversation with his Omani companions.

As Clark headed out into the lobby of the hotel, behind him Target Two loosened his tie.

Twenty minutes later the sixty-five-year-old American stood under his umbrella in Büyükşehir Belediyesi Park, just across the street from the hotel and restaurant, and he watched as an ambulance raced to the entrance.

The poison was deadly; there was no antidote that any ambulance on earth would carry in its onboard narcotic box.

Either Target Two was already dead or he would be so shortly. It would look to doctors as if the man had suffered a cardiac arrest, so there would likely be no investigation into the other patrons of the Tuğra who just happened to be dining around the time of the unfortunate, but perfectly natural, event.

Clark turned away and headed toward Muvezzi Street, fifty yards to the west. There he caught a taxi, telling the driver to take him to the airport. He had no luggage, only his umbrella and a mobile phone. He pressed the push-to-talk button on his phone as the cab rolled off into the night. "Two

is down. I am clear," he said, softly, before disconnecting the call and slipping the phone under his raincoat and into the breast pocket of his suit coat with his left hand.

Domingo Chavez took the calls from Driscoll and then Clark, and now he focused on his own portion of the operation. He sat alone on the old state-owned passenger ferry between Karaköy, on the European bank of the Bosphorus, and Üsküdar, on the Asian bank. On both sides of him in the cabin of the huge boat, red wooden benches were full of men and women traveling slowly but surely to their destinations, rocking along with the swells of the strait.

Ding's target was alone, just as his surveillance indicated he would be. The short forty-minute crossing meant Chavez would need to take his man here on the ferry, lest the target receive word that one of his colleagues had been killed and adopt defensive measures to protect himself.

Target Three was a thickly built thirty-five-year-old. He sat on the bench by the window reading a book for a while, but after fifteen minutes he went out on the deck to smoke.

After taking a few moments to make certain no one else in the large passenger cabin paid any attention to the Libyan as he stepped outside, Chavez left his seat and headed out another door.

The rain was steady and the low cloud cover blocked off even the faintest light from the moon, and Chavez did his best to move in the long shadows cast from the lights along the nar-

row lower deck. He headed to a position on the railing some fifty feet aft of his target, and he stood there in the dim, looking out at the twinkling lights of the shoreline and the moving blackness as a catamaran crossed under the Galata Bridge in front of the lights.

Out of the corner of his eye he watched his target smoking near the rail. The upper deck shielded him from the rain. Two other men stood at the rails, but Ding had been following his man for days, and he knew the Libyan would linger out here for a while.

Chavez waited in the shadows, and finally the others went back inside.

Ding slowly began approaching the man from behind.

Target Three had gotten lazy in his PERSEC, but he could not have made it as long as he did as both an operative of his state security service and a freelance spy by being a fool. He was on guard. When Ding was forced to cross in front of a deck light to close in on his target, the man saw the moving shadow, and he flicked away his cigarette and spun around. His hand slid down into his coat pocket.

Chavez launched himself at his target. With three lightning-fast steps he arrived at the edge of the railing and shoved his left hand down to secure whatever weapon the big Libyan was reaching for. In Ding's right hand he swung a black leather sap down hard against the left temple of the man, and with a loud crack Target Three went out cold, slumping down between the railing and Chavez.

The American slipped the sap back into his pocket and then hefted the unconscious man by his head. He looked

around quickly to make sure no one was around, and then with a short, brutal twist he snapped his target's neck. After a final glance up and down the lower deck to make sure he remained in the clear, Ding rolled the Libyan up onto the railing and let him tip over the side. The body disappeared into the night. Only the faintest splash could be heard above the sounds of the ocean and the rumbling engines of the ferry.

Chavez returned to a different seat on the red bench in the passenger cabin a few minutes later. Here he made a quick transmission on his mobile device.

"Three is down. Ding is clear."

The new Türk Telecom Arena seats more than fifty-two thousand spectators and fills to capacity when local Istanbul soccer team Galatasaray takes the pitch. Though it was a rainy night, the huge crowd remained dry, as they were protected under a roof that was open only above the playing field itself.

The match tonight against crosstown rival Beşiktaş had the stands overflowing with locals, but one foreigner in attendance did not watch much of the play on the field. Dominic Caruso, who knew precious little about the game of soccer, instead focused his attention on Target Four, a thirty-one-year-old bearded Libyan who'd come to the match with a group of Turkish acquaintances. Dom had paid a man sitting alone just a few rows above his target to trade seats with him, so now the American had a good view of his target, as well as a quick outlet to the exit above.

For the first half of the match there was little for Caruso to do but cheer when those around him cheered, and stand when they stood, which was virtually all of the time. At half-time the seats all but emptied as fans headed for concession stands and restrooms, but Target Four and most of his mates remained in their seats, so Caruso did the same.

A goal by Galatasaray against the run of play livened the crowd just after halftime. Shortly after this, with thirty-five minutes remaining in the match, the Libyan looked down at his mobile phone, then turned and headed for the stairs.

Caruso shot up the stairs ahead of his target, and he rushed to the closest bathroom. He stood outside the exit and waited for his target.

Within thirty seconds Target Four entered the bathroom. Quickly Dominic pulled from his jacket a white paper sign that read *Kapalı*, or “Closed,” and taped it onto the exit door of the restroom. He pulled an identical sign out and taped it to the entrance. He entered the bathroom and shut the door behind him.

He found Target Four at a bank of urinals, alongside two men. The other pair was together, and soon they washed up and headed back out the door. Dom had stepped up to a urinal four down from his target, and while he stood there he reached into the front of his pants under his jacket and retrieved his stiletto.

Target Four zipped up, stepped back from the urinal, and walked toward the sink. As he passed the man wearing the Galatasaray jersey and scarf, the man suddenly spun toward him. The Libyan felt the impact of something on his stomach,

and then found himself being pushed back by the stranger, all the way into one of the stalls on the far side of the bathroom. He tried to reach for the knife that he kept in his pocket, but his attacker's force against him was so relentless he could only stumble back on his heels.

Both men fell into the stall and onto the toilet.

Only then did the young Libyan look down at where he had felt the punch to his gut. The hilt of a knife protruded from his stomach.

Panic and then weakness overtook him.

His attacker shoved him down onto the floor next to the toilet. He leaned forward, into the Libyan's ear. "This is for my brother, Brian Caruso. Your people killed him in Libya, and tonight, every last one of you is going to pay with your lives."

Target Four's eyes narrowed in confusion. He spoke English, so he understood what the man said, but he did not know anyone named Brian. He'd killed many men, some in Libya, but they were Libyans, Jews, rebels. Enemies of Colonel Gaddafi.

He'd never killed an American. He had no idea what this Gatatasanay fan was talking about.

Target Four died, slumped on the floor by the toilet in the bathroom of the sports stadium, certain that this all must have been some terrible mistake.

Caruso pulled off his blood-covered soccer jersey, revealing a white T-shirt. This he ripped off as well, and under it was another jersey, this one for the rival team. The black and

white colors of Beşiktaş would help him blend in with the crowd just as he had in the red and gold of Galatasaray.

He jammed the T-shirt and the Galatasaray jersey into the waistband of his pants, pulled a black cap out of his pocket, and put it on his head.

He stood over the dead man a moment more. In the blind fury of revenge he wanted to spit on the dead body, but he fought the urge, as he knew it would be foolish for him to leave his DNA at the scene. So instead he just turned away, walked out of the bathroom, pulling both *Kapalı* signs off the doors as he headed toward the exit of the stadium.

As he passed through the turnstiles at the exit, leaving the cover of the stadium and walking into the heavy rain, he pulled his mobile from the side pocket of his cargo pants.

“Target Four eliminated. Dom’s clear. Easy money.”

THREE



Jack Ryan, Jr., had been tasked with eliminating the target with the fewest question marks surrounding him. A lone man sitting at his desk in his apartment, or so said all their surveillance.

It was supposed to be the easiest op of the night, and Jack understood this, just like he understood he was getting the mission for the simple fact that he was still the low man on the operational totem pole. He had worked high-risk clandestine ops all over the world, but still fewer than the four other operators in his unit.

Initially he was going to be sent on the op at the Çırağan Palace to go after Target Two. It was decided that dousing a piece of meat with poison would be the easiest hit of the night. But Clark ended up getting that op because a sixty-five-year-old man dining alone would not be a queer occurrence in a five-star restaurant, where a young Westerner, just a couple of years out of college, eating such a meal in such a place all by

himself would pique the interest of the restaurant staff to the degree that someone might remember the lone diner after the fact in the unlikely event authorities came with questions when another patron dropped dead a few tables over.

So Jack Junior was tasked with taking down Target Five, a communications specialist for the ex-JSO cell, named Emad Kartal. Certainly not a walk in the park, but, the men of The Campus decided, Jack had it covered.

Kartal spent virtually every evening on his computer, and it was ultimately this habit that brought about the eventual compromise of the JSO cell. Six weeks earlier he'd sent a message to a friend in Libya, and this message had been picked up and decoded, and Ryan and his fellow analysts back in the States had subsequently intercepted the intelligence.

They'd further compromised both the man and his cell by hacking into his mobile phone's voice mail; from this, they'd listened to correspondence among the cell members that indicated they were working together.

At eleven p.m., Ryan found himself entering the apartment building of his target via a counterfeit keycard created by the technical gurus of his organization. The building was in the Taksim neighborhood and within sight of the five-hundred-year-old Cihangir Mosque. It was a slightly upscale property in an upscale neighborhood, but the flats themselves were tightly packed-together studio units, eight to a floor. Jack's objective was on the third floor, smack in the middle of the five-story building.

Ryan's orders for the hit had been succinct. Make entry on Target Five's flat, confirm the target visually, and then shoot

him three times in the chest or head with subsonic rounds fired from his .22-caliber suppressed pistol.

Ryan climbed the wooden staircase in his soft-soled shoes. While doing so, he pulled his black cotton ski mask down over his face. He was the only man operating with a mask tonight, simply because he was the one member of the team not working in public, where a masked man would draw more attention.

He made his way to the third floor, and then entered the brightly lit hallway. His target was three doors down on the left, and as the young American passed the other units he heard people talking, the sounds of televisions and radios and phone conversations. The walls were thin, which was not good news, but at least the other residents of the floor were making some noise themselves. Jack hoped his silencer and his quieter-than-normal subsonic ammo would work as advertised.

At his target's door he heard the sounds of rap music coming from inside the flat. This *was* good news, as it would aid in masking Ryan's approach.

His target's door was locked, but Ryan had instructions on how to get in. Clark had been in the building four times in the past week during his target reconnaissance before he'd switched ops with the youngest member of the team, and Clark had managed to pick several of the locks of unoccupied flats. The locks were old and not terribly difficult, so he bought a similar model at a local hardware store, then spent an evening tutoring Jack on how to quickly and quietly defeat the device.

Clark's instruction proved effective. With only the faint sounds of the soft scratching of metal on metal, Jack picked the door lock in less than twenty seconds. He drew his pistol and stood back up, then opened the door.

In the studio flat he found what he expected. Across a small kitchen was a living area, and then, at the far wall, a desk facing away from the entrance. At the desk a man sat with his back to Ryan in front of a bank of three large flat-screen computer monitors as well as various peripherals, books, magazines, and other items within reach. Foam containers of half-eaten Chinese takeout sat in a plastic bag. Next to this, Ryan confirmed the presence of a weapon. Jack knew handguns, but he could not immediately identify the semi-automatic pistol just a foot from Emad Kartal's right hand.

Jack stepped into the kitchen and quietly pulled the door closed behind him.

The kitchen was bathed in light, but the living area where his target sat was dark, other than the light coming from the computer monitors. Ryan checked the windows to his left to make sure no one could see in from the apartments across the street. Confident his act would go undetected, he took a few steps forward, closer to his target, so that the gunfire would be centered in the room and no closer to the hallway than necessary.

The rap music thumped throughout the room.

Perhaps Jack made a noise. Maybe he threw a shadow across the shiny surfaces in front of his victim, or cast his reflection on the glass of the monitors. For whatever reason, the

JSO man suddenly kicked back his chair and spun around, reaching desperately for his Turkish-made Zigana 9-millimeter semiautomatic. He took the weapon in his fingertips and raised it at the intruder while he was still in the process of obtaining a firing grip on the gun.

Jack identified the target from his surveillance photos and then he fired once, sending a tiny .22-caliber bullet into the man's stomach, right where the back of his head would have been had the man not startled. The Libyan dropped his pistol and lurched back onto his desk, not from the force of the impact but rather from the natural urge to escape the searing pain of the bullet wound.

Jack fired again, hitting the man in the chest this time, and then again, this bullet striking dead-center mass, between the pectoral muscles. The middle of the man's white undershirt bloomed dark red.

The Libyan clutched his chest, grunted as he spun around, and then slumped over on his desk. His legs gave out totally and gravity took over. The ex-JSO operative slid down onto the floor and rolled onto his back.

Quickly Ryan walked up to the man and raised his weapon for a final shot to the head. But then he thought better of it; he knew the report of the gun, though quiet, was in no way silent, and he also knew this apartment was surrounded by other units that were occupied. Instead of creating another noise that could be heard by a dozen or so potential witnesses, he knelt down, felt for the man's carotid artery, and determined him to be dead.

Ryan stood to leave, but his eyes flicked up to the desktop computer and the three monitors on the desk. The hard drive of the machine would contain a treasure trove of intelligence, Jack knew, and as an analyst, he found nothing on this earth more enticing than an intel dump at his fingertips.

Too bad his orders were to leave everything behind and bolt the instant he neutralized his target.

Jack stood quietly for a few seconds, listening to the ambient noises around him.

No screams, no shouts, no sirens.

He felt confident no one heard the gunfire. Maybe he could find out what the Libyans were working on. They'd picked up only bits and pieces during their surveillance, just enough to know the JSO men were operational, likely doing work for some syndicate based outside of Istanbul. Jack wondered if he could find enough pieces here on Emad Kartal's computer to put the puzzle together.

Shit, thought Jack. Could be drugs, forced prostitution, kidnapping. Ninety seconds' work right now might well save lives.

Jack Ryan quickly dropped to his knees in front of the desk, pulled the keyboard closer, and grabbed the mouse.

Though he was not wearing gloves, he wasn't worried at all about leaving prints. He'd painted New-Skin onto the tips of his fingers; it was a clear, tacky substance that dried clean and clear and was used as a liquid bandage. All the operators were using it in situations where gloves were either not practical or would look out of place.

Jack pulled up a list of files on the machine and slid the folders over to the monitor closest to him. There was a splatter of blood from Kartal's chest wound diagonally across the monitor, so Jack grabbed a dirty napkin out of the bag of half-eaten Chinese take-out food and wiped the screen clean.

Many of the files were encrypted, and Ryan knew he did not have the time to try and decrypt them here. Instead he looked around the desk and found a plastic baggie with a dozen or so portable flash drives in it. He pulled out one of the drives and slid it into a USB port on the front side of the computer, then copied the files to the drive.

He saw Target Five's e-mail client open, and he began pulling up e-mails. Many were in Arabic, one looked like it might have been in Turkish, and a few were just files without any subject headings or text. One after another he opened these e-mails and clicked on attachments.

His earpiece chirped. Jack tapped it with his fingertip. "Go for Jack."

"Ryan?" It was Chavez. "You're late reporting in. What's your status?"

"Sorry. Just a slight delay. Target Five is down."

"There a problem?"

"Negative."

"You clear?"

"Not yet. Getting a sweet intel dump off the subject's PC. Another thirty seconds and I'm done."

"Negative, Ryan. Leave whatever you find. Get out of there. You've got no support."

“Roger that.”

Ryan stopped clicking through the e-mails, but a new message appeared in Kartal’s inbox. Instinctively he double-clicked on the attached folder and JPEG photos opened in a grid across one of the monitors in front of him. “What if we can use this stuff?” he asked, distraction in his voice as he expanded the first photo in the grid.

“Quick and clean, kid.”

But Jack was not listening to Chavez now. He scrolled through the images hurriedly at first, but then he slowed and looked at them carefully.

And then he stopped.

“Ryan? You there?”

“Oh my God,” he said, softly.

“What is it?”

“It’s . . . it’s *us*. We’re burned, Ding.”

“What are you talking about?”

The images on the screen in front of Jack seemed to be taken from security cameras, and the quality of the shots varied, but they were all good enough for Jack to ID his team. John Clark standing in the doorway of a luxurious restaurant. Sam Driscoll driving a scooter up a rainswept street. Dom Caruso walking through a turnstile in a cavernous passage, like that of a sports stadium. Domingo Chavez talking into his mobile phone on a bench inside a ferryboat.

Jack came to the realization quickly that these pictures had been taken this evening. All within the last hour or so.

As Ryan rose from his knees, his legs weak from the near

panic of knowing his team's actions tonight in Istanbul were under surveillance. Another message popped up at the top of the inbox. Jack all but dove at the mouse to open it.

The e-mail contained one image; he double-clicked to open it.

Jack saw a masked man kneeling at a keyboard, his intense eyes peering at a point just below the camera that captured the image. Behind the masked man, on the floor, Ryan could just make out the foot and leg of a man lying on his back.

Ryan turned his head away from the monitor, looked back over his left shoulder, and saw Target Five's foot sticking up.

Jack looked on the top of the center monitor and saw the small camera built into the display's bezel.

This image had been taken sometime in the last sixty seconds, while Ryan downloaded data off the hard drive.

He was being watched this very second.

Before Jack could say anything else, Chavez's voice blasted his right ear. "Fucking split *now*, Jack! That's a *goddamned* order!"

"I'm gone," he said, his voice a whisper. His eyes locked onto the lens of the tiny webcam, and his thoughts on whoever was behind it, looking at him right now.

He started to reach for the USB drive in the computer, but it occurred to him this machine would retain all the pictures of his team on it, which could easily be seen by whoever came to investigate Target Five's death.

In a flurry of movement Jack dropped to the floor, un-

plugged the computer, and frantically ripped cables and cords out of the back of the machine. He hefted the entire thirty-pound device and carried it with him out the door of the flat, down the stairs, and out into the street. He ran through the rain, which was prudent as well as good tradecraft. It seemed a fitting thing for a man with a computer clutched in his arms to do in the rain. His car was a block away; he dumped the machine in the backseat and then drove out of Taksim toward the airport.

As he drove he called Chavez back.

“Go for Ding.”

“It’s Ryan. I’m clear, but . . . shit. *None* of us are clear. All five of us have been under surveillance tonight.”

“By *who*?”

“No idea, but *somebody* is watching us. They sent images of the entire team to Target Five. I took the hard drive with the pictures on it. I’ll be at the airport in twenty minutes, and we can—”

“Negative. If somebody is playing us you don’t know that that box of wires in your car is not bugged or fitted with a beacon. Don’t bring that shit anywhere near our exfil.”

Jack realized Ding was right. He thought it over for a second.

“I’ve got a screwdriver on my utility knife. I’m going to pull over in a public place and remove the drive from the tower. I’ll inspect it and leave the rest right there. Dump the car, too, in case anyone planted something while I was in Five’s flat. I’ll find another way to the airport.”

“Haul ass, kid.”

THREAT VECTOR

“Yeah. Ryan out.”

Jack drove through the rain, passing intersections with mounted traffic cameras high above, and he had the sick feeling that his every move was being watched by an unblinking eye.